

Governor's Advisory Council on the Blind
Friday, October 5, 2018, 10:00am – 12:00pm
Smyrna Rest Area
5500 North DuPont Highway.
Smyrna, DE 19977
Conference Room

Contact: Michele Hamilton

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A quorum was determined and the meeting was called to order at 10:05am.

Roll Call:

Council Members: Chair Lloyd Schmitz, Patti Addison, Ken Rolph, Jillian Queen and Pat Carzo

Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI) Staff: Elisha Jenkins, Director; Sandi Miller, Deputy Director; Jill Morrison, Michele Hamilton, and Shirley Bryson

Absent: Kat Bottner, and Deidre Morris

Public: Rob Keller, Wayne Marsh, and Mary Marsh

Minutes: Minutes from September meeting were approved.

Discussion regarding upcoming meetings: A motion was made by Patti Addison to hold November's meeting on the 9th due to council member conflicts. The motion was seconded by Ken Rolph. Motion was carried.

Patti Addison motioned to hold 2019 meetings on the first Friday of each month at the Smyrna Rest Area. The motion was seconded by Jillian Queen and the motion carried.

Vocational Rehabilitation Unit Report- Shirley Bryson

The DVI-VR goal is to increase the quality of employment outcomes and increase the quantity of employment by 15%.

The VR Unit currently has a caseload of 237 clients.

- Total of 35 gained successful employment
- This exceeded their goal of 31 by 4
- The median income is \$18.43
- Transition aged students 14-21 being served is 76
- Transition aged youth 14-24 being served is 95
- Total in Training and Education is 61

The GACB was told previously, that the reason for closing DIB was because DIB did not offer open, competitive, intergraded employment. A question was then posed as to, if DIB closed for those reasons stated above then, why are VR clients being placed in the same kind of positions at other sites. This question will be visited at a later date.

-The Champions Breakfast is scheduled for October 18, 2018 will be held at Delaware Technical & Community College in Terry Campus in Dover. This will be an opportunity for the Division for the Visually Impaired–VR to celebrate the partnership with our local business partners.

-NCC Summer Youth hosted at the Division for the Visually Impaired provided a classroom setting for developing young people's ambition early in their career. It provided the opportunity for two of the youths to work on site at DVI with various professionals that served the blind and visually impaired population. Special employment slots for students from the City of Wilmington and the New Castle County Youth programs were placed on jobs that were similar to their employment interest. DVI will continue to collaborate with the New Castle County Summer Youth program in the future.

-The Summer Skills Academy

The Summer Skills Academy was hosted at DVI and accommodated 10 students with an age range of 14-17. They held activities that included: Vocational Rehabilitation workshops, art therapy, nutritional workshop, and assistive technology workshops. The students were also exposed to field trips which included: The Baltimore Aquarium and the Franklin Institute. Most of the activities were held at BlindSight of Delaware campus.

On June 27, 2018, the Division for the Visually Impaired hosted a Graduation & Recognition celebration for the Summer Skills Academy participants, and the DVI students that were served from middle school, high school and college. There were (10) college students, (18) high school students graduated, (7) middle school students graduated to high school and approximately (10) interns were all honored.

-Governor's Initiative

The Porter State Service Center and the Division for the Visually Impaired are involved in a Governor's initiative to bring services to the core of the City of Wilmington at the Porter State Service Center. This is an attempt to bring as many services to the Porter State Service Center for the residents of the city of Wilmington.

Division for the Visually Impaired Director's Report- Elisha Jenkins

In September, the Division underwent a Federal Compliance Audit in reference to our VISTA through CNCS programs. The audit went very well and CNCS Officers were extremely impressed with our accomplishments in such a short period of time.

The project's focus is to alleviate poverty through addressing barriers to employment, education, and training for blind, deaf, and disable population.

BEP has been conducting taste testing for the Healthy Vending initiative. These tests have been taking place at BEP Vendor/Operator assigned locations by AB+C Marketing; the marketing company organizing the testing.

The 1st held at the Department of Labor on September 25th was well-received. Surveys are being completed and the Blind Vendors Committee is finding that this initiative is doing very well throughout the state.

The Healthy Vending comparative analysis from August 2017 verses August 2018 showed an increase in healthy choices by 20%, which is an increase from the same time last year by 40%.

The Food Truck pilot program shows challenges. Some of those challenges are:

- -assurance of compliance to rules and regulations
- -not much captive audience
- -Government support
- -Authorizations to be on state property
- -Permits

Independent Living

The Independent Living Services Unit hosted a ***“What’s New in Technology”*** workshop in September at the Biggs Building which focused on new equipment that is available at DVI for demonstration. Also in September, ILS conducted a ***“Fall Prevention”*** workshop that was facilitated by the ILS staff to the Wilmington and Newark Peer Support Group at BlindSight Delaware. This workshop focused on exercise, home modifications, and psychological fears regarding falls.

Suggested offering of an 8-week, full scale workshop on **“A Matter of Balance”** fall prevention program to individuals who are visually impaired in the spring of 2019.

Technology/Material Center

The Delta Gamma Sorority will receive their 2nd Governor’s Outstanding Award at Dover Downs on October 24, 2018. The award is in the field of Education and Literacy.

Education/Orientation and Mobility

The execution of Delaware's Unified English Braille Implementation Plan consisted of a full-day of Unified Braille (UEB) instruction workshop. This was conducted in September with focus being on comprehending the underlying structure of UEB and how to apply it to content materials with emphasis on mathematics and science.

Communication

The Division Facebook page is steadily gaining followers. By the end of the eighth month of 2018, the page has increased its following by 25% and direct message services by 14%. The purpose of the page is to advertise workshops, public events, and host a closed group who are parents/families of children that are being served by DVI. When fully implemented, parents will have the ability to privately create events and share information, while teacher's coordinating the group will have the ability to post blogs specific to the education of children with blindness.

Old Business- A question was posed as to whether anyone was looking into the financial loss by the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) at the Delaware Technical & Community College Terry Campus in Dover. There was large turnover in staff as well as \$15,000 in sales, and a \$20,000+ food purchase. The chair opined that perhaps more inquiry was needed but made no motion.

New Business

Public Comment

Patti Addison indicated that DABA has been very supportive of DVI with fundraisers, the Bike-to-the-Bay, and the kids Beach House weekend.

Patti Addison informed members of their newsletter, the Lions Club, and the upcoming Christmas events on December 4th in Sussex County, the 6th in Kent County, and on the 8th in New Castle County. Any questions, please call Patti at (302) 998-5913. Patti has also taken BlindSight to the road with their Road Store traveling throughout the state.

BlindSight will be hosting a Music Appreciation at BlindSight. Information will be sent out at a later time.

Tickets will be sold for the Disability Ball that is being held on November 2nd, 2018 at the Chase Riverfront Center in Wilmington for \$65.00 ea. You can call (302) 765-0191 or go on line to www.disabilityball.com.

Rob Keller encouraged everyone to make sure they voted.

Adjournment

First motion to adjourn by Ken Rolph, 2nd by Jillian Queen. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 11:40am.